

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 EB-11 SAM-01 FSI-01 PM-07 INR-10

IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 DRC-01 DPW-01

PRS-01 OMB-01 SS-20 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /121 W

----- 014358

O R 131100Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1696

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USDEL JEC PARIS UNN

CIA

DIA

JCS

JUSMAAG

WHITE HOUSE

USAJFKCMA

CINCPAC

CINCPACAF

CO 7 PSYOPS GP

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CINCPACFLT

CINCUSARPAC  
DEPCHIEF JUSMAAG UDORN  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
USDAO/SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 1966

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT PFOR ECON VS  
SUBJ: EMBASSY SAIGON'S MISSION WEEKLY FEB 7-13, 1974

BANGKOK ALSO PASS OSA; DEPT ALSO FOR AID/W; CINCPAC FOR POLAD;  
DOD PRO USAJFKCMA ATTN: ATCS-WL-DSA

#### THE WEEK IN SUMMARY

- THE CEASEFIRE
- REACTION TO THE PARACELS/SPRATLY ISSUE CONTINUES
- GVN TO CONTEST "PRG" ACCESSION TO GENEVA CONVENTIONS
- ALL EYES ON THE SPRATLY'S NOW
- NO FORWARD MOVEMENT IN PARIS
- FRENCH PARLIMENTARY DELEGATION LEAVES FOR HOME
- EXCHANGE RATE GUARANTEE ON CIP REMOVED
- PRICES DIP
- BLACK MARKET CURRENCY AND GOLD PRICES
- BUSES RETURNING TO SAIGON

#### I. INTERNAL

##### A. THE CEASEFIRE

MR-1 CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS REMAINED LOW. MR-2 SAW A SLIGHT INCREASE IN MILITARY ACTIVITY. THE LEVEL OF COMBAT IN MR-3 WAS UP. MR-4 SAW A REGION-WIDE DROP OF SLIGHTLY MORE THAN 25 PERCENT IN COMMUNIST-INITIATED INCIDENTS. ICCS REPRESENTATIVES DID OBSERVE GVN-PRG PRISONER EXCHANGES, BUT THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS CONTINUE TO STALL ICCS INVESTIGATIONS. THE TPJMC CONCENTRATED ON THE EXCHANGE OF PERSONNEL BY THE TWO SIDES. COMPLETION OF THE FEBRUARY 8 SAIGON-HANOI LIAISON FLIGHT MADE POSSIBLE THE MEETING OF USAF AND DRV TECHNICAL EXPERTS TO

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DISCUSS FLIGHT PROCEDURES. AFTER EARLY AGREEMENT ON ONE TOPIC FOR THE AGENDA OF THE FEB 12 MEETING, THE FPJMT BOGGED DOWN ON THE QUESTION OF SUB-TOPICS.

THE GVN/PRG PERSONNEL RELEASES WERE RESUMED AS SCHEDULED ON FEB 8, WITH THE RELEASE AT LOC NINH OF 200 GVN CIVILIAN DETAINEES; AND HAVE PROGRESSED WITHOUT INCIDENT THROUGH THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 13. THE GVN HAS FALLEN BEHIND THE DAILY

QUOTA OF 200 AS A RESULT OF COMPLICATIONS IN TRYING TO KEEP NINE OPERABLE HU-1B HELICOPTERS CONSTANTLY COMMITTED TO THE LOC NINH PHASE OF THE RELEASE OPERATIONS, BUT IT HAD DELIVERED 520 DETAINEES THROUGH FEBRUARY 12 - OF THESE , 12 CHOSE TO REMAIN WITH THE GVN. ON FEB 12 THE GVN RECEIVED AT DUC NGHIEB THE FIRST 100 OF 410 RVNAF POWS. RECONNAISSANCES OF RELEASE SITES IN QUANG NAM, QUANG TIN, AND QUANG NGAI HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, AND THE GVN EXPECTS TO RECEIVE 104 CIVILIANS AT THESE SITES ON FEBRUARY 14 AND 15. DISCUSSIONS ARE IN PROGRESS ON DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS FOR NEXT WEEK. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION IN THE PRESS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EXCHANGE OR RELEASE OF "NAME" DETAINEES LIKE TRAN NGOC CHEU, NONE HAVE BEEN INCLUDED IN THE EXCHANGES AS YET. WE BELIEVE THE GVN IS STILL UNDECIDED ON THIS MATTER

ON FEBRUARY 8 RADIO HANOI DENOUNCED THE US FOR ALLEGEDLY ILLEGALLY SUPPLYING THE RVN WITH WARSHIPS IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT.

B. REACTION TO THE PARACETU/SPRATLY ISSUE CONTINUES

THE WEEK SAW CONTINUED INTERNAL REACTION TO THE ISSUE OF THE PARACEL/SPRATLY ISLANDS. NUMEROUS MEETINGS WERE REPORTED FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY, DENOUNCING "CHINESE AGGRESSION" IN THE PARACELS AND AFFIRMING RVN CLAIMS TO THE SPRATLYS. SAIGON TV HAS CARRIED FREQUENT SPECIAL PROGRAMS ON THE ISSUE, FEATURING DRAMATIC VIEWS OF THE ISLANDS AND SENTIMENTAL SONGS SPECIALLY ADAPTED TO THE SUBJECT. ON FEBRUARY 7 ALL SAIGON LYNESE-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS APPEARED WITH AN EDITORIAL PROTESTING THE USE OF FORCE BY COMMUNIST CHINA IN THE PARACELS; DEMANDING THAT THE PRC WITHDRAW AND RESTORE THEM TO THE RVN; AND PROCLAIMING THE READINESS OF ALL VIETNAMESE OF CHINESE DESCENT TO "SUPPORT THE RVN ARMED FORCES AND GOVERNMENT".

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ON FEBRUARY 12, A LEADING AN QUANG FIGURE ALSO ISSUED A STATEMENT SUPPORTING THE RVN CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ISLANDS: VENERABLE HUYEN QUANG REPORTEDLY STATED THAT THE PRC ACTION IN THE PARACELS IS "AN ACT FLOUTING INTERNAL LAW" AND RECALLED THE "COUNTLESS TIMES IN VIETNAMESE HISTORY THAT THE PEOPLE HAVE RISEN TO FIGHT AGAINST CHINESE INVADERS AND TO CHASE THEM OUT." THE VENERABLE CONTINUED: "IN VIEW OF THEIR TRADITIONALLY INDOMITABLE WILL, NEITHER THE PEOPLE NOR THE ARMY OF THE RVN WILL STAND ASIDE AND ALLOW THE PARACELS TO BE LOST." ASSOCIATING THEMSELVES WITH HUYEN QUANG'S STATEMENT REPORTEDLY WERE VENERABLES TRI QUANG AND THIEN MINH; THESE ARE ALSO LEADING AN QUANG FIGURES WHO HAVE FOUND THEMSELVES RECENTLY ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF VARIOUS INTERNAL DISPUTES. THE GVN HAS ALSO BEEN MAKING EFFECTIVE USE OF THE PARACELS/SPRATLYS ISSUE IN ITS PROPAGANDA WAR WITH BOTH HANOI AND THE

"PRG", VISIBLY EMBARRASSING THEM BOTH AND WINNING, WE BELIEVE, IMPORTANT ADVANTAGES ON THE DOMESTIC SCENE THEREBY. PRESSED BY NEWSMEN AT THE REGULAR WEEKLY "PRG" PRESS CONFERENCE AT DAVIS STATION FEB. 9, THE "PRG" SPOKESMAN LAMELY COMMENTED THAT THE ISSUE OF SOVEREIGNTY IS AN "IMPORTANT" ONE WHICH DESERVES "CAREFUL STUDY, BUT THAT THE DISPUTE SHOULD BE SETTLED PEACEFULLY. GVN RIPOSTES WERE SWIFT, AND WE BELIEVE WITH EFFECT, ON RADIO/TV AND IN THE PRESS. MAIN THRUST OF COURSE IS THAT NEITHER HANOI NOR THE "PRG" DARE TO CHALLENGE THE AGGRESSION OF ONE OF THEIR COMMUNIST "MASTERS," THEREBY BETRAYING THE NATION.

## II. EXTERNAL

A. GVN TO CONTEST "PRG" ACCESSION TO GENEVA CONVENTIONS. SAIGON IS REACTING STRONGLY TO THE RECENT ACCESSION OF THE "PRG" TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949 AND INTENDS TO CONTEST STRONGLY ANY MOVE TO INVITE THE "PRG" TO THE FORTHCOMING DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE (FEBRUARY 20 TO MARCH 29) SCHEDULED BY THE SWISS TO CONSIDER TWO ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE CONVENTIONS. ON FEBRUARY 7, IN A NOTE TO THE SWISS EMBASSY IN SAIGON, THE GVN MFA CHALLENGED THE "PRG'S" QUALIFICATIONS AS A STATE AND THEREFORE ITS ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH THE DEPOSIT OF INSTRUMENTS OF ACCESSION TO THE CONVENTION. HOLDING THE ACT OF ACCESSION BY THE "PRG" TO BE "NULL AND VOID", THE NOTE ASKS THAT THE GVN POINT OF VIEW BE CIRCULATED TO OTHER MEMBER STATES. EMBASSY BERN HAS REPORTED MEANWHILE THAT DESPITE INCREASING PRESSURE FROM THE DRV TO ISSUE AN INVITATION TO THE "PRG" TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE (INCLUDING THREATS THAT THE DRV ITSELF WOULD BOYCOTT

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THE CONFERENCE), THE SWISS HAVE DECIDED TO LET THE CONFERENCE ITSELF SETTLE THE MATTER. NEITHER THE SOVIETS NOR THE CHINESE HAVE SO FAR RAISED THE ISSUE WITH BERN.

### B. ALL EYES ON THE SPRATLY'S NOW.

WITH THE ISSUE OF WHO CONTROLS THE PARACEL ISLANDS AT LEAST TEMPORARILY SETTLED, ATTENTION THROUGHOUT THE REGION HAS TURNED TO THE FOUR-WAY DISPUTE OVER SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE SPRATLY ARCHIPELAGO. ON JANUARY 5, THE MFA HAD RESPONDED SHARPLY TO THE PRC'S EARLIER STATEMENT CLAIMING THIS ISLAND GROUP ALONG WITH THE PARACELS AND SENT AMBASSADOR PHUONG IN WASHINGTON TO SEE THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 AID-20 EB-11 SAM-01 FSI-01 PM-07 INR-10 IO-14

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 DRC-01 DPW-01 PRS-01

OMB-01 SS-20 INRE-00 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /121 W

----- 014409

O R 131100Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1697

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USDEL JEC PARIS UNN

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WHITE HOUSE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 1966

BANGKOK ALSO PASS OSA; DEPT ALSO FOR AID/W; CINCPAC FOR POLAD;

DOD PRO USAJFKCMA ATTN: ATCS-WL-DSA

TON THE MATTER. APPARENTLY JUDGING THAT THE PRC WOULD REFRAIN  
FROM TAKING MILITARY ACTION IN THE MORE DISTANT SPRATLIES, A MOVE  
WHICH WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY AROUSE THE PHILIPPINES, TAIWAN AND

PROBABLY MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA AS WELL, THE GVN SENT FORCES THERE LAST WEEK AND HAS BEEN TRADING STATEMENTS AND PROTESTS WITH MANILA AND TAIPEI SINCE. THOUGH NOT HOPEFUL OF REACHING AN EASY ACCOMMODATION WITH THE ROC, THE GVN HAS TOLD THE PHILIPPINES THAT

1. IT REAFFIRMS ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ISLAND GROUP AND
2. IT ADVOCATES THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES SUCH AS THIS, ESPECIALLY WITH FRIENDLY NATIONS LIKE THE PHILIPPINES.

MANILA ON THE EIGHTH PROTESTED ROC AND GVN "DISPLAYS OF FORCE" IN THE AREA AND THEN HAD ITS PROTEST LODGED WITH THE UN SECY GEN. SAIGON ALSO REACTED SWIFTLY AND FAVORABLY TO SECY INGERSOLL'S STATEMENT IN PENANG ADVOCATING PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE, POINTING OUT THAT THIS WAS PRECISELY THE GVN'S ATTITUDE. THE SAIGON PRESS HIGHLIGHTED INDONESIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEFENSE/FOREIGN AFFAIRS CHAIRMAN IMRON ROSJATI'S WARNINGS ABOUT CHINESE MILITARY EXPANSION INTO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA. IN ADDITION, THE MFA CONTINUED TO CRITICIZE THE DRV AND "PRG" FOR THEIR NON-COMMITTAL ATTITUDES ON THE CONFLICT. ARTICLES IN THE SAIGON PRESS TO THE EFFECT THAT PRES THIEU PLANNED A TRIP TO SPRATLY ISLAND TO PLANT THE GVN FLAG THERE (AS EMPEROR GIA LONG HAD DONE IN 1816) HAVE BEEN NEITHER CONFIRMED NOR DENIED BY GOVT SPOKESMEN.

C. NO FORWARD MOVEMENT IN PARIS

IN THE 40TH SESSION OF THE GVN - "PRG" BILATERAL TALKS IN PARIS ON FEB 8, THE TWO SIDES TRADED CHARGES OF OBSTRUCTION, REITERATED LONG-ESTABLISHED PROPAGANDA THEMES, AND MADE NO VISIBLE  
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PROGRESS. GVN DEPUTY PRIMIN VIEN WAS ABSENT FROM THE DISCUSSIONS, WHICH RESUME FRIDAY, FEB 15.

D. FRENCH PARLIAMENTARY DEL LEAVES FOR HOME

THE FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEL, LED BY CHAIRMAN FERNAND ICARD OF THE FINANCE-ECONOMY AND PLANNING COMITE, WAS RECEIVED BY PRES THIEU ON FEB 7 AND, AFTER ISSUING A VERY FAVORABLE STATEMENT REGARDING THE STABILITY AND VIABILITY OF THE GVN, CALLED ON FRENCH BUSINESSMEN TO INCREASE THEIR INVESTMENTS IN VIET-NAM AND PROMISED MORE FRENCH INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL DELS WOULD BE COMING TO SAIGON IN THE FUTURE.

END CONFIDENTIAL

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

III. ECONOMIC

A. EXCHANGE RATE GUARANTEE ON CIP REMOVED

THE GOVT REMOVED THE EXCHANGE RATE GUARANTEE ON

IMPORTS THROUGH THE US-FINANCED COMMERCIAL IMPORT PROGRAM. EFFECTIVE WITH IMPORT LICENSES APPROVED AFTER FEB 11, IMPORTERS MUST MAKE PIASTER PAYMENT BASED ON THE EXCHANGE RATE PREVAILING AT THE TIME OF DOLLAR PAYMENT. PREVIOUSLY, IMPORTERS MADE PAYMENT BASED ON THE EXCHANGE RATE AT THE TIME THE LETTER OF CREDIT WAS OPENED, WHICH MEANT THAT THEY WERE INSULATED FROM PIASTER DEVALUATIONS DURING THE 5-10 MONTH PERIOD BETWEEN LICENSING AND ARRIVAL OF GOODS.

IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO GAUGE THE IMPACT, BUT THIS LATEST MEASURE IS DESIGNED TO CURB SPECULATIVE DEMAND FOR CIP COMMODITIES. IMPORTS WITH THE GVN'S OWN FOREIGN EXCHANGE STILL CARRY AN EXCHANGE RATE GUARANTEE, BUT REQUIRE AN "ADVANCE DEPOSIT" WITH THE NATIONAL BANK EQUIVALENT TO THE FULL VALUE OF THE COMMODITY AT THE TIME OF APPROVAL TO IMPORT.

#### B. PRICES DIP

THE SAIGON RETAIL PRICE INDEX DECLINED 0.8 PERCENT DURING  
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THE WEEK ENDED FEB 11. THE FLOW OF GOODS FROM THE PROVINCES HAS RETURNED TO NORMAL AFTER THE TET HOLIDAY SLOWDOWN. MARKET SOURCES ATTRIBUTE THE 1.5 PERCENT DROP IN THE FOOD CATEGORY TO A COMBINATION OF SEASONAL INCREASED SUPPLY AND SLUGGISH DEMAND.

#### C. BLACK MARKET CURRENCY AND GOLD PRICES

BLACK MARKET DOLLARS CONTINUED TO SELL AT NO PREMIUM OVER OFFICIAL RATES LAST WEEK. US\$ 100 GREEN BROUGHT 575/QS\$1. GOLD LEAF MOVED UP FROM US\$ 109.63 TO \$111.10 PER TROY OUNCE, BUT THE INCREASE DID NOT MATCH THE JUMP IN GOLD PRICES ON THE HONG KONG MARKET (\$131.49 TO \$139). THIS SUGGESTS THAT LOCAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, PARTICULARLY THE CURRENT CREDIT SQUEEZE, ARE DAMPENING DEMAND FOR GOLD, DESPITE THE SIGNIFICANT SAIGON-HONG KONG PRICE DIFFERENTIAL.

#### D. BUSES RETURNING TO SAIGON

IN THE WAKE OF SHARP INCREASES IN GAS PRICES LAST NOV AND AGAIN IN JAN, THE GOVT HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING THE EXPANSION OF CHEAP PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. TWO BUS COMPANIES, ONE AFFILIATED WITH THE VIETNAMESE LABOR CONFEDERATION (CVT) AND THE OTHER WITH THE VIETNAMESE CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS, HAVE BEEN LICENSED TO OPERATE PUBLIC BUSES IN SAIGON. CURRENTLY, 228 BUSES ARE OPERATING ON SIX ROUTES, AND 220 MORE BUSES WILL BE ADDED IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. THE UNIONS ARE PHASING OUT THE SMALLER LAMBRETTAS BY OFFERING LAMBRETТА DRIVERS THE OPTION TO BUY A SHARE IN A BUS AND OPERATE IT ON A COOPERATIVE BASIS, FOUR TO A BUS. THE UNIONS ALSO ASSIST DRIVERS IN SELLING THEIR LAMBRETTAS, AND PROVIDE CREDIT IF NECESSARY.

THE BUSES NOW IN USE ARE PARTLY FORMER MACV BUSES AND PARTLY  
CONVERTED TRUCK CHASSIS. FARES RANGE FROM 20 TO 50 PIASTERS  
(3 CENTS TO 9 CENTS) FOR DISTANCES UP TO 15 KM.  
MARTIN

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** rowelle0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** PINT, PFOR, ECON, VS  
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